

EFFLUVIA FROM SEWERS.

SIR,—Despite the importance of the subject, I fear you must begin to nauseate the very name of, much less the effluvia from, sewers. I can only hope the old proverb vulgarly condemning too much stirring, will be reversed as regards our present subject; and as a proof thereof, I would fain hope some one of the Metropolitan Sewers Commission will at once take up the subject of sewer purification—and test the value or otherwise of the various propositions which have recently been put forth. With respect to the plan proposed in your number for the 4th instant, I cannot believe that any apparatus with gratings in connection with the carriage-way would be found to answer the purpose practically; and as respects the *modus operandi* of the machinery itself, I confess that, to my mind, the scheme lacks practicability, or, at least, a more lucid explanation, and I must still think that the air-flues or columns, with whomsoever the idea originated, are infinitely better calculated to ensure a permanently satisfactory result. And while on this point, without wishing to detract from “Mr. J. P.” or “Mr. J. L.,” I would just observe, and it appears to have been overlooked by the writers on these matters, that there seem to be no good reasons (especially if a draft be created in their favour) why these outlets for the gases should be confined to the site of the sewer itself, when branch pipes or drains might conduct them to any available spaces, such as court-yards (for which a rental might be paid), the blank sides of houses situated at corners of streets, public mews, and the like situations.

Before dismissing the subject of sewers, I would hazard a few remarks on a point which I believe has in some measure escaped our rather too zealous reformers. “J. L.” tells us not to fear the bursting as resulting from the pent-up gases, and assures us that this results rather from bad engineering and defective workmanship. Both these defects may exist in our sewers; but, verily, I believe, this tune has been harped upon too loudly, and to a certain extent, unfairly (perhaps because the tune is popular); and we should bear in mind that when explosion takes place, no work (or material) be it of the most cyclopean character, can altogether resist its force. I am at the same time free to admit that due attention should be given to the *shape* of the sewers; and there can be no doubt that the less straight work be admitted into their form the better will they be enabled to resist pressure. I think, however, that many of the complaints would not be heard of if greater care were taken in building the sewers; such as doing the work in its place, instead of on a bench in the street, and paying due attention to the perfect bonding of the work, using hoop-iron pretty freely, and above all, giving the green work something like a chance of setting, before either the contractor or the director of the works, proceeded to overwhelm it with the earth covering and backing. This earth backing should, in my opinion, be most carefully filled in and rammed, unless concrete, which would be much more efficient, were substituted for it.—I am, Sir, &c.,
OCT. 14th, 1845.

FURNITURE WOODS.—The Lords Commissioners of her Majesty's Treasury have recently ordered that a parcel of partridge wood imported from Antigua be admitted free of duty as furniture wood. Their lordships have also ordered that a parcel of cherry wood recently imported from New Orleans be admitted duty free. These decisions, which are of very considerable importance to the importers of and dealers in wood used in the manufacture of furniture, have been communicated to the revenue officers at the various outposts throughout the United Kingdom for their information and government with respect to future importations of these articles.

TABLEAUX VIVANS.—Herr Keller with a number of models, male and female, is exhibiting at the gallery of Painters in Water-colours, Pall Mall East, a series of living pictures of extraordinary beauty. We advise all artists to see them; effects of light and shade are produced which will give them hints of no mean value. Keller is evidently an artist himself and sets his figures with a power rarely seen.

AMENDMENT OF METROPOLITAN BUILDINGS ACT.

SIR,—The announcement in your paper of last week, the 11th instant, headed “The Official Referees,” must, I think, be gratifying to the building world; inasmuch as you state that it is intended to bring in a bill, early next session, to amend the Act,—that a third referee will be appointed, and that Mr. Higgins has consented to resume his office *pro tem*.

The necessity for an amendment of the present Act is more than generally admitted, and I trust a less vexatious, inquisitorial, and “Paul Pry” law will be enacted.

The original purpose of a Building Act was simply the prevention of extension of fire, and the framers of it may do well to bear in mind the legal adage, “*de minimis non curat Lex*,” and not legislate on trifles, or interfere beyond what a wholesome care for the public weal requires, so that a man really cannot do what he likes with his own.

That a third referee is desirable, will, I dare say, be admitted, when we consider that two persons very frequently and fairly, differ in opinion; and a third person is required to decide. And as one of the understood advantages of the new Act was, that building matters would be referred to, and decided on, by persons professing that art, namely, surveyors, and not magistrates or lawyers, the necessity of calling in the registrar, who at present seems prominent, will not be required. The official forms, notices, and fees, may possibly also be abridged and lessened; they are now multifarious and heavy, pressing hard on the building public and all connected with the Act; who appear to have exchanged the rule of King Log for that of King Cormorant. At the same time it must be admitted, by the modifications that have in several instances been made, a right spirit seems to prevail.

That Mr. Higgins remains is, I think, gratifying, for a man more practically conversant with the subject, or fit for the duty, can hardly be found. He is not one of the mere Bureau-cracy or martinet school, and his plain good sense and freedom from crotchets may tend to render the administration of the Act more practicable and less vexatious.

He is also well known, and has so little official hauteur—“*Procul hinc! procul este, profanum!*”—that his continuance in office will probably be hailed with satisfaction by all whom it may concern.

To whom, Mr. Editor, and yourself, these observations are respectfully submitted, by your obedient servant,
October 13, 1845.

ON THE HISTORY OF STAINED GLASS.

At the archaeological meeting before mentioned, a paper by Mr. Winston, on the painted glass in Winchester Cathedral and other local buildings, was read. The writer remarked that the design and execution of glass paintings are as capable of convenient classification as architectural peculiarities, and that he should refer throughout to the three great mediæval styles of glass painting, by the terms Early English, Decorated, and Perpendicular, each style being nearly contemporaneous with the several styles of architecture as designated by Rickman. The term *Cinquecento* he should apply to any glass prior to 1540, which exhibits in its details the peculiar style of ornament known by that name. The earliest specimens of English glass that he had met with at Winchester, are the two fragments probably of a border, worked in with other glass, in the west window of the nave of St. Cross, and two other fragments of a border over the door leading into the refectory. All this glass is of precisely the same character; and to be referred, he was of opinion, to the beginning of the thirteenth century. A few small fragments of later Early English are at present contained in the cloister of the college. Two circles of Early Decorated glass are over the door of the refectory of St. Cross, and two or three more in the west window of the Cathedral. They are composed of plain pieces of coloured glass, disposed in a geometrical pattern, and prove how much of the effect of early glass is owing to the texture of the material. He would add here, that it appears to have been the practice formerly to glaze the windows according to the progress of the

work. Thus at York, the decorated glass in the aisles is earlier than that in the west window of the nave; and the Perpendicular glass in the aisles of the choir is earlier than that in the great east window. All the present glass in the side windows of the College Chapel is modern, as well as that in the east, with the trifling exception of two small figures, the head of an angel, and four other little bits of glass in the tracery of the window. Considering the time when the glass in the east window was executed, it must be admitted to be a very good copy of the old. The art of making coloured glass was not so well understood then as now. Had the glass been copied now, it would only have been one degree better than it is. Its effect would still have been that of painted glass, exhibiting the drawing of the early part of the fifteenth century, and the colouring of the nineteenth instead of that of the sixteenth. The texture of all modern manufactured glass, uncoloured as well as coloured, is identical only with that of the sixteenth century, and is totally different from the texture of earlier glass. The principle of adapting the execution to the material pervades all ancient, and indeed all original manufactured work, and it is vain to imitate the drawing without also imitating the material in which the work is to be executed. Hence it is that modern encaustic tiles, whatever may be the date of the pattern impressed upon them, always appear to be of the date of the manufacture of the tile. The east window of the college library is of the time of Edward IV., and was moved to its present position from the south side of the college chapel. The arms in the refectory of St. Cross are of the latter part of the fifteenth century. Those of Cardinal Beaufort are uncommonly fine. The glass in the east window of the cathedral choir is perhaps a little earlier than 1525, and is the work of Bishop Fox, whose arms and motto, “*Est Deo gratio*,” are introduced into it. This window must have been a magnificent one; but it is unfair to judge of it in its present state, when so little of the glass occupies its old position in the window. The top central light is filled with glass of Wykeham's time, and all the rest of the window with glass of Fox's time. In point of execution be apprehended the painted glass in this window was about as perfect as glass could well be. The library at the deanery contains some excellent specimens of heraldic glass of the time of James I., and Charles I., in which, however, the decline of the art of glass painting is very apparent.

FOREIGN ARCHITECTURAL AND COLLATERAL INTELLIGENCE.

Schinkel's Works.—The writings and designs of this great defunct architect (member of the Council of State of Prussia), are now publishing in a form worthy of his great genius. They are as follows:—1. Collection of all architectural plans and projections of Schinkel. (*Sammlung architektonischer Entwürfe*.) It consists of one hundred and forty-nine plates, which, in the cheap edition, cost about 10*l*. Supplement thereto, twenty-six plates with text, about 3*l*. But this is still surpassed by a really splendid work entitled—2. Works of high architecture—planned and designed for execution. (*Werke der höhern Baukunst*.) The first portion of the work contains—Plan of a palace for the Acropolis of Athens. Ten plates of the largest size compose this portion of Schinkel's work. The second portion contains—Plan for the Imperial Palace of Orinda in the Crimea, with fifteen plates of equal size.—No library of any public institution ought to be without these works.

The Scientific Congress at Naples is progressing well. Persons of the highest rank (dukes and such like) vie in rendering every assistance and service, a thing quite unusual with the hitherto Italian *grandezza*. On the 28th ult. took place the festival inauguration of the meteorological observatory on Mount Vesuvius—one of the most original institutions in the known world. The next will be the inauguration of the colossal statue of Religion (!) on the new Campo santo at Poggio Reale.

On the 2nd Oct. the men of science will be gratified by the unusual sight of two excavations, which will be made at different places at Pompeii. Of the memoirs read we cannot state, at present, more than that, that of Pro-